Ireland.—Roman Catholics
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PETITION

OF THE

ROMAN CATHOLICS

OF

IRELAND.

INTENDED TO HAVE BEEN

PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT

IN FEBRUARY 1792.

WITH

A PREFACE.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED BY P. BYRNE, No. 108, GRAFTON-STREET.

M.DCC.XCII.

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PREFACE.

THE following is the Petition of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, which Mr. O'Hara attempted to preſent to the Houſe of Commons on Wedneſday the firſt of February. As another Petition has ſince been ſubſtituted in its Place, ſome Gentlemen have thought proper to aſſert, that the former Petition was ſeditious: And that it was withdrawn, becauſe, (according to their Suppoſition), the ſedate and dignified Decorum, the ſober and well attempered legiſlative Gravity of an *Iriſh Senate* has awed theſe rude and ſturdy Petitioners into a Style of Expreſſion more becoming the Majeſty of that auguſt and truly venerable Aſſembly. Such is the Judgment of theſe ſound and impartial Critics, concerning a Houſe of Commons which they *have*, and a Petition which they have *not* ſeen. As the beſt Refutation of the Calumny, the Petition is now ſubmitted to the Public.

AMIDST the Variety of Moral Productions generated in the rank Fecundity of a great Metropolis, there is to be found in this City (as I am credibly informed) one of a

very ſingular Deſcription.—A Set of Perſons who, in the common Affairs of Life, talk and act like rational Creatures; and who (though they were never before known very particularly to labour under the Influence of polemic Dogma or political Principle;) have of late been agitated with all the Symptoms of the moſt violent religious Zeal and the wildeſt political Fanaticiſm. They are perpetually haunted with a Chimera of the Brain, which they purſue without ceaſing, and which (in a Form of Speech wholly deſtitute of Meaning and unknown to the Laws) they denominate THE PROTESTANT ASCENDENCY.——I ſhall not be at all ſurpriſed if, among the Sectators of this *new political Superſtition*, ſome are found who will think the Petition now ſubmitted to the Public *ſeditious*, perhaps *treaſonable*. Such is the Aſſociation of our Ideas that when *one* is radically depraved, the whole Mind is ſubverted. Thoſe who are ſo far ſubject to the Impreſſions of a fervid Imagination, as to fancy they ſee the *Deſtruction* of the Britiſh Conſtitution in the *Communication of its Franchiſes*—thoſe who, in a Purſuit of the ancient Rights and Liberties derived from the *earlieſt Times*, and founded in the Inſtitutions of our *feudal Anceſtors* can diſcover the *levelling Principle* and the *modern* Tenets of natural Right, may, by a Continuation of the Illuſion, ſee many Things in this Petition greatly to diſturb their minds. The impreſſive Senſe of conſcious injured Worth, will ſound in *their* Ears like Contumacy and Defiance.—In the Refutation of unjuſt Calumnies—they will diſcover *a Libel:* In the Aſſertion of outraged Loyalty, they will find—*the Language of Sedition:* A manly Confidence in the *Juſtice* of Parliament, they will term an Invaſion of Privilege;

Privilege; and a Reſtriction of Legiſlative Omnipotence; *The Lamentations* of unmerited Proſcription, the fair Expoſition of public Grievances and the Cries of an oppreſſed People, they will diſtort into *Intimidation and Menace:* And, perhaps in ſome ſtronger Paroxiſm, pronounce it a *treaſonable Manifeſto.* All this Confuſion of Ideas and Inverſion of Terms proceeds from an Error in the Judgment, and cannot be imputed as Guilt to any Man. Charity requires that it ſhould be attributed ſolely to the riſing Fumes of PROTESTANT ASCENDANCY. We all know and pity the Effect produced in the Mind by the Dominion of ſome one predominant Idea. *Veniam petimus damuſque viciſſim.* Other Men, when they think on *the Emancipation of the Roman Catholics,* may alſo be inclined to ſee Things under Appearances perhaps foreign to their true Nature. In the palid Fears of State—they may ſee the bold Pretexts and brazen Front of ſhameleſs Tyranny: In a pious Solicitude for the Welfare of the Church—they may ſee the low Workings of an ignorant and bigotted Rancour: they may diſcover the Spirit of civil and religious Perſecution—*in a Panegyric on the glorious Revolution:* and in that generous Zeal for the *Proteſtant Aſcendancy* which warms ſo many Breaſts—they may behold the churliſh, inſatiable, degenerate Cravings of Proſcription and Monopoly. Is this too ſtrong? Are theſe Objects magnified and diſtorted by an Error of intellectual Viſion? Be it ſo. Let thoſe who would take the Mote out of their Neighbour's Eye, remove the Beam from their own.

IF on the Peruſal of the enſuing Petition, any Body ſhould think the Style of it unuſual and unparliamentary—

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let him recollect that the Circumſtances of the Caſe are unuſual alſo. It is not the Occurrence of every Day. Three-fourths of a Kingdom petition the Legiſlature of that Kingdom for the partial Reverſal of a *parliamentary Attainder*—by which (in Addition to an Infinitude of other penal Inflictions) they have ſtood disfranchiſed for more than Half a Century—without a Crime! Men in ſuch a Situation *ought* to feel deeply and ſtrongly. There is a Sort of Dignity in unmerited Degradation, and the Language of thoſe who aſpire to the Britiſh Conſtitution ought not to be baſe and ſervile. In compoſing this Petition the Writer endeavoured to expreſs the genuine Sentiments of a *loyal* People—by an unnatural Inverſion of moral Order ſubjected to the Penalties of *Diſaffection*—And he ſucceeded.

The Neceſſity of adverting to the peculiar Character, and even to the accidental Temper, of thoſe whom you addreſs is among the firſt Principles of Compoſition.—And ſome Readers may object that this Petition was framed upon the Ideas of a Stranger to this Country, and therefore unacquainted with the *peculiar Genius* of an Iriſh Parliament. This Point we leave to the Deciſion of an impartial Public. It muſt be confeſſed (whether it makes for or againſt the Writer) that in drawing the Petition, the Idea evidently conceived and carefully preſerved in his Mind was that of an Application from Iriſh Subjects to an Iriſh Parliament, not—an Addreſs from Slaves to Tyrants—An Application to Minds open to Conviction, deſtitute of Biggotry, ſenſible to human Miſeries,

Miſeries, patient to hear Wrongs and ready to redreſs them—Such as Parliament is in Contemplation of Law—devoid of Paſſion; ſuperior to Intereſt, and endued with that beneficent and parental Wiſdom which more than the Nomination of the Crown, or the Delegation of the People, conſtitutes the Eſſence of legiſlative Power. Such was the Idea on which the original Petition was framed. And ſurely it was impoſſible that *ſo great a Portion of the People*—glowing with Loyalty to their Sovereign, warmed with a patriotic Affection to their Fellow-ſubjects, and penetrated with the Senſe of undeſerved Affliction, ſhould appear in the Face of ſuch an Aſſembly as the Houſe of Commons is or *ought to be*, with a Sincerity too frank and undiſguiſed; with too firm a Profeſſion of their Principles, with too ſtrong or too feeling an Expoſition of their Griefs.

HUMAN Councils are governed by Events. The Seſſion having commenced with ſomewhat of a clouded Horizon, the Roman Catholics thought it more adviſeable to contract their Petition, and to run their Parliamentary Courſe, as it were, cloſe reefed, expoſing the leaſt poſſible Canvaſs to the Fury of the Storm. Another Principle preſented itſelf. To oppoſe every Reſource of guarded and cautious Expreſſion, againſt the rude Aſſaults of a cavelling and captious Hoſtility.—By the lenient Application of a profound and proſtrate Obſequiouſneſs, to ſooth the ulcerated and ſore Irritability of enraged and feſtering Prejudices. It was hoped that there might exiſt in the Scale of human Prudence, a Degree

gree of Circumſpection, a Point of over-ſtrained Humility, which, if it could not obtain the Object of the Petition, might poſſibly ſecure it from Inſult. Whether the Principle was right or wrong, the Experiment has failed. The Houſe of Commons of Ireland has rejected humble Prayer, and ſpurned modeſt Merit. But whether the Effect of that Petition (though it ſat ſo ill and ſo ſhort a Time upon the Stomach of Parliament) be entirely loſt—whether the Diſcuſſion it produced has injured or ſerved the Cauſe of the Roman Catholics, is another Queſtion. There may be thoſe who think that the Character, the Integrity and the Ability of the Men who in the Cauſe of the Roman Catholics contended for the Liberties of their Country—in the Eſtimation of Ireland, in the Eſtimation of England, in the Eſtimation of Europe—more than compenſates for the Paucity of their Numbers. I ſincerely congratulate the Roman Catholics of Ireland on the Sum of that Day's Events. After the Buffets of ſo many penal Statutes, a Parliamentary Indignity, more or leſs, is no great Matter. The Roman Catholics are three Millions of Men. It is not much *among* them all. What though their Petition which had been regularly brought up—on a Queſtion put—and lain two whole Days on the Table of the Houſe, was dragged from its peaceful Abode, and by a Figure peculiar to the Iriſh Nation (after having been *received)* was *rejected* in the Face of Day: What though the Names of the firſt Merchants and moſt reſpectable Citizens of this Kingdom annexed to a Petition on Behalf of three Millions of the People, were read aloud, amidſt Scoffs and Sneers, and Peals of Ideot Laughter: What though

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no Inquiry was inſtituted—no Day *to take into Conſideration*—no *formal Motion* made (after due Solemnity of Debate) to die of *the previous Queſtion*, or by *the Order of the Day* to be ſwept into eternal Oblivion: Yet the Foundation of Roman Catholic Emancipation is laid—is laid in Parliament. Reaſon has made its Lodgment: It will prevail. The Minds of Men will open; their Hearts will relent: They will ſee that Juſtice is Wiſdom, and Union Strength: That to communicate is not to loſe: That univerſal Liberty is public Proſperity, and public Proſperity private Emolument. In ſpite of Force, in ſpite of Intereſt, in ſpite of Monopoly, in ſpite of Biggotry, in ſpite of Ignorance, in ſpite of all the Reſiſtance made or to be made by civil Hatred, ſhrouded in the leſs opprobious Name of Prejudice—Allegiance will carry Protection and Loyalty Freedom, until the Privileges of the Britiſh Conſtitution ſhall be co-extenſive with the Britiſh Empire. He who has atchieved the Emancipation of Iriſh Legiſlature, has alſo put his Hand to Roman Catholic Emancipation. The ſame proſpective Wiſdom which, in the Advantages, foreſaw the Poſſibility of a great and happy Revolution—The ſame Magnanimity to brave the Shock of clamourous, idle Prejudice—The ſame tranſcendant and victorious Eloquence is again exerted, and will be exerted with the ſame Succeſs. He laid the firſt Stone of *general Liberty*. He raiſed the Superſtructure. To diſtribute *internal* Freedom to the *whole* People through all its Deſcriptions, will be the Completion of his Work. I ſaw myſelf, with pleaſing Wonder—I ſaw what Eloquence, aided by the Authority of long-tried Worth, could do in the

the Cauſe of *real* Liberty. The angry Foam ſubſided. Pride, Diſdain, Hardneſs of Heart, and the Spirit of Domination ſtood ſilent, abaſhed, diſcountenanced, and aſhamed. They acknowledged the Preſence of ſomething ſuperior and commanding—

" Ac veluti magno in populo cum ſæpe coorta eſt
" Seditio ſævitque animis *ignobile* Vulgus,
" Jamque faces & ſaxa volant; furor arma miniſtrat;
" Tum, pietate gravem, ac *meritis* ſi forte virum quem
" Conſpexere, ſilent, arrectiſque auribus adſtant:
" Ille regit dictis animos & pectora mulcet."

Proceed, illuſtrious Senator! perpetual Champion of Iriſh Freedom. Be the Deliverer of your Country a ſecond Time, and upon a ſecond Principle. Fulfil all your Deſtiny. The Cauſe is worthy of the Man. It is the Cauſe of true Liberty; it is the Cauſe of true Charity. It ſhall be yours to cheer the ſinking Heart, and raiſe the drooping Head; to convey the genial Warmth of the Britiſh Conſtitution into the Abodes of Oppreſſion, Miſery and Want, and by infuſing that Principle of Life through the whole Maſs of Society, to fortify the Stamina of Public Strength and of National Glory.

To return for a Moment to the Subject of a Petition which fell ſo pitiouſly at the threſhold of political Exiſtence. What would have been its Fate if it had come forward *in Time*, it is impoſſible now to determine. A ſingle Circumſtance varied frequently produces an Alteration in the whole Train of Events The original Intention was, that the Petition ſhould have been preſented the *firſt* Day of the Seſſion.

At

At that Time nothing had yet appeared of that ſtrong Expreſſion of Opinion, which thoſe who delight in figurative Modes of Speech, would call the *Senſe of the Houſe*. The happy Arts by which the Minds of Men have been filled with Alarm and Confuſion had not been extended beyond the conſtituent Part of a Proteſtant Commons. No Advantage had been gained againſt the Roman Catholics in any other Place. No Man had yet made a forced March—to pre-occupy the Ground—to ſeize upon the Meaſure—in order, as it were, on the Poſt and Citadel of Relief to open a Battery upon the Roman Catholics.—In appearance to ſlobber them over with the groſs and filthy Slaver of a canting ſimulated Affection, but in reality to corrode their Fame with the Venom of ſlanderous Aſperſion—To play faſt and looſe with Names and Things—To trick out a vain and ſpurious Image of departed Ariſtocracy; to call it the *real Catholics;* and (with a ſtrange Mixture of Abſurdity and Impudence) to refuſe *their Name* to the People *themſelves*—To damn the deluded few with fraudulent Praiſe—To brand the guiltleſs many with falſe Imputation—To hold out to the Proteſtant Mind deluſive Securities, to iufuſe real Fears—In one Hand to carry Liberality, Toleration, Grace and Favour; and with the other, to ſcatter Diviſion, Diſtraction, Suſpicion and Diſcontent. Such is the Epitome of the Game which has been played againſt the Catholics. It was a Thing to be deſired, that if poſſible they ſhould have anticipated by the Promptitude of their Movements, this complicated Involution of hoſtile Manœuvre. That not being the Caſe, the Enemies of the Catholics (and therefore the Enemies of their

Country) have gained a momentary Advantage—but one which may end in their Shame and Confuſion. To develope this whole Myſtery of criminal Folly, to unravel the perplexed Labyrinth of Paſſion, Abſurdity and Fraud, thro' which it has been thought expedient to *wind* the Queſtion of the Roman Catholics—will be the Taſk of a leiſure Hour. Many are the Paths that lead to Death. And many are the Ways by which a Kingdom may be brought to the Ground. Amongſt theſe not the leaſt effectual—is—in a great national Criſis—the ſubſtitution of a low Craft, the little Tricks of State, the miſerable Equivocation of double Politics, in the Room of true Policy; that is to ſay, the generous manly Deciſions of Honour, Truth and Juſtice. What muſt that judgment be, what muſt be that Taſte which could prefer the former! When this Petition was written the Option had not yet been made The whole State of Things was different. The Animoſities of Men, not yet kindled into a Flame, ſtill lurked in the obſcurer Avenues of Opinion, in the Flues and Funnels of the State. The burning Rage of THE PROTESTANT ASCENDENCY had not yet broke through all Reſtraint, and domineering in the Porticoes of Legiſlation itſelf, laid in Aſhes thoſe fair Columns whoſe juſt and equal Proportions are the true Periſtile of the Commonwealth—The Principles of public Prudence, and political Morality.

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PETITION

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OF THE

Roman Catholics of Ireland, &c.

SHEWETH,

WE your Petitioners, being appointed by ſundry of his Majeſty's Subjects profeſſing the Roman Catholic Religion, to be Agents for conducting Applications to the Legiſlature for their Relief, in our own and their Names, beg Leave to approach this High Court of Parliament, with an unfeigned Reſpect for its Wiſdom and Authority; and at the ſame Time, with a deep and heartfelt Senſation of our ſingular and deplorable Situation. And firſt of all we implore (and for this we throw ourſelves on the Indulgence of Parliament) that no irregularity or defect in Form or Language, ſhould obſtruct the Succeſs of theſe our moſt ardent Supplications. The Circumſtances in which we ſtand deſerve Conſideration. For near a

Hundred Years, We and our Fathers, and our Grandfathers, had groaned under a Code of Laws, (in ſome Parts already purged from the Statutes) the like of which, no Age, no Nation, no Climate ever ſaw. Yet, ſore as it were from the Scourge of active Perſecution, ſcarce yet confirmed in our Minds, and but lately ſecure in our Perſons and in our Houſes, from the daily Alarms of Search-warrants and Informers, we come before Parliament for the firſt Time; and we come to aſk an Alleviation of Burdens, under which we can only find Conſolation in the melancholy Compariſon of former Times. In this State of recent Apprehenſion and troubled anxious Hope, with Minds unadapted to the preciſe Obſervances of Decorum, we reſt upon the ſimple Merits of our Caſe. It is a Part of our Calamities, that we do not know how to tell them with Propriety; and if our Complaints ſhould deviate into Remonſtrance, and we ſhould ſeem to upbraid, when we mean to ſupplicate, we truſt a due Allowance will be made for Expreſſions extorted by our Anguiſh, or proceeding from an inevitable Ignorance of Form. Excluded from the Conſtitution in all its Parts, and in many reſpects Aliens to the Law, how ſhould we have learned the Forms of Parliament?

The Hardſhips we ſuffer proceed from the Law. It is therefore only to the Fountain of the Law that we can look for Relief. You are the great Council of our Sovereign Lord the King; but you are alſo Subjects like ourſelves. The Ear of Majeſty, by the Law of the Land, and by the Benignity of that Sovereign, whom it

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is your Glory to imitate, is ever open to the Petitions of his People. As far as we are able to diſcern the great Outlines of a Conſtitution, which we know only in Speculation, we conceive that it is the Boaſt of the Conſtitution of theſe Kingdoms, to have aſſociated a Portion of the People into the Sovereign Power; in order that, not dazzled by the Awe of Supreme Majeſty, the Subject may find a happy mediatorial Inſtitution, an Aſylum wherein to depoſite the Burden of his Griefs, to expoſe the Nakedneſs of his Oppreſſions, and indulge Complaint even to Exaggeration. There were, indeed, thoſe who would have made us believe, that Parliament was only to be approached with circumſpect and timid Steps; at moſt, in general Terms; and that wrapped in proud inexorable State, you would conſider a Specification of the Wants of the People, as an Inſult and a Reaſon for not ſupplying them. But we knew it could not be. We knew that no Senate, no King, no Tyrant had ever profeſſed to turn his Ear from detailed Supplication. The Majeſty of God himſelf is willing to receive, and demands the Incenſe of particular Prayer. And ſhall we, who ſpeak from Man to Man, from Subject to Subject, not dare to ſpecify the Meaſure and Extent of our crying Neceſſities. Deſpiſing that baſe and hypocritical Affectation, we are ſure it is far more congenial to the Nature and to the Temper of Parliament, with a firm and generous Confidence to ſay, as we ſay—here is the Evil—there is the Remedy: To you we look for Relief.

Behold us then before you, three Millions of the People of Ireland, Subjects of the ſame King, Inhabitants

of

of the ſame Land, bound together by the ſame ſocial Contract, contributing to the ſame Revenues, defended by the ſame Armies, declared by the authentic Words of an Act of Parliament, to be good and loyal Subjects to his Majeſty, his Crown and Government; and yet doomed to one general unqualified Incapacity; a univerſal Excluſion, a univerſal civil Proſcription. We are excluded from the State, we are excluded from the Revenues. We are excluded from every Diſtinction, every Privilege, every Office, every Emolument, every Civil Truſt, every Corporate Right. We are excluded from the Navy, from the Army, from the Magiſtrature, from the Profeſſions. We are excluded from the Palladium of Life, Liberty, and Property, the Juries and Inqueſts of our Country.—From what are we not excluded? We are excluded from the the Conſtitution. We ſtand a ſtrange Anomaly in the Law; not acknowledged, not diſavowed; not Slaves, not Freemen; An Exception to the Principles of Juriſprudence; A Prodigy in the Syſtem of Civil Inſtitution. We incur no ſmall Part of the Penalties of a general Outlawry, and a general Excommunication. Diſability meets us at every Hour, and in every Walk of Life. It cramps our Induſtry, it ſhackles our Property, it depreſſes our Genius, it debilitates our Minds.—Why are we diſfranchiſed, and why are we degraded? Or rather, why do theſe Evils afflict our Country, of which we are no inconſiderable Part?

We moſt humbly and earneſtly ſupplicate and implore Parliament, to call this Law of univerſal Excluſion to a ſevere Account, and now at laſt, to demand of it, upon what

what Principle it ſtands, of Equity, of Morality, of Juſtice, or of Policy. And, while we requeſt this Scrutiny into the Law, we demand alſo the ſevereſt Scrutiny into our Principles, our Actions, our Words, and our Thoughts. Wherein have we failed as loyal and affectionate Subjects to the beſt of Sovereigns, or as ſober, peaceable, and uſeful Members of Society. Where is that People who can offer the Teſtimony of a Hundred Years patient Submiſſion to a Code of Laws, of which no Man living is now an Advocate—without Sedition, without Murmur, without Complaint. Our Loyalty has undergone a Century of ſevere Perſecution, for the Sake of our Religion, and we have come out of the Ordeal, with our Religion, and with our Loyalty.

Why then are we ſtill left under the Ban of our Country? We differ, it is true, from the National Church in ſome Points of doctrinal Faith. Whether it is our Bleſſing or our Misfortune, He only knows to whom all Things are known. For this our Religion we offer no Apology. After Ages of learned and critical Diſcuſſion, we cannot expect to throw farther Light upon it. We have only to ſay, that it is founded on Revelation as well as the Religion eſtabliſhed by Law. Both you and we are regenerated in the ſame Baptiſm, and profeſs our Belief in the ſame Chriſt; you according to the Church of England, we according to the Church of Rome. We do not exerciſe an abject or obſcure Superſtition. If we err, our Errors have been, and ſtill are, ſanctioned by the Example

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of many flouriſhing, learned, and civilized Nations. We do not enter, we diſdain to enter into the Cavils of antiquated Sophiſtry, and to Inſult the Underſtanding of Parliament, by ſuppoſing it neceſſary to prove, that a Religion is not incompatible with civil Government, which has ſubſiſted for ſo many Hundred Years under every poſſible Form of Government, in ſome tolerated, in ſome eſtabliſhed, even to this Day.

With Regard to our civil Principles, we are unalterably, deeply, and zealouſly attached to his Majeſty's Perſon and Government. Good and loyal Subjects we are, and we are declared by Law to be. With Regard to the Conſtitution of the State, we are as much attached to it as it is poſſible for Men to be attached to a Conſtitution by which they are not avowed. With Regard to the Conſtitution of the Church, we are, indeed, inviolably attached to our own: Firſt, becauſe we believe it to be true; and next, becauſe beyond Belief, we know that its Principles are calculated to make us, and have made us good Men and good Citizens. But as we find it anſwers to us individually all the uſeful Ends of Religion, we ſolemnly and conſcientiouſly declare, that we are ſatisfied with the preſent Condition of our eccleſiaſtical Polity. With Satisfaction, we acquieſce in the Eſtabliſhment of the National Church; we neither repine at its Poſſeſſions, nor envy its Dignities; we are ready, upon this Point, to give every Aſſurance that is binding upon Man.

With Regard to every other Subject, and to every other Calumny, we have no Diſavowals, we have no Declarations to make: Conſcious of the Innocence of our Lives, and the Purity of our Intentions, we are juſtified in aſking what Reaſon of State exiſts, and we deny that any does exiſt, for leaving us ſtill in the Bondage of the Law, and under the protracted Reſtriction of Penal Statutes. Penalties ſuppoſe, if not Crimes, at leaſt a Cauſe of reaſonable Suſpicion. Criminal Imputations like thoſe, (for to be adequate to the Effect, they muſt be great indeed) are to a generous Mind, more grievous than the Penalties themſelves. They incontrovertibly imply, that we are conſidered by the Legiſlature as ſtanding in a doubtful Light of Fidelity or Loyalty to the King, or to the Conſtitution of our Country, and perhaps to both. While on theſe unjuſt Suppoſitions we are deprived of the common Rights and Privileges of Britiſh and of Iriſh Subjects, it is impoſſible for us to ſay, we are happy. It is impoſſible for us to ſay we are contented while we indure a relentleſs civil Proſcription, for which no Cauſe is alledged, and for which no Reaſon can be aſſigned.

Because we now come, with a clear, open, and manly Voice, to inſiſt upon the Grievances under which we ſtill Labour, it is not to be inferred, that we have forgot the benignant Juſtice of Parliament which has relieved us from the more oppreſſive, but not the moſt extenſive Part of the Penal Syſtem. In thoſe days of Affliction, when we lay proſtrate under the Iron Rod, and as it were, intranced in a Gulph of Perſecution, it

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was neceſſary for Parliament to go the whole Way, and to ſtretch out a ſaving Hand to relieve us. We had not the Courage to look up with Hope, to know our Condition, or even to conceive a Remedy. It is becauſe the former Relaxations were not thrown away upon us; it is becauſe we begin to feel the Influence of ſomewhat more equal Laws, and to revive from our former inanition, that we now preſume to ſtand erect before you: Conceiving that Parliament has a Right to expect, as a Teſt of our Gratitude, that we ſhould no longer lie a dead Weight upon our Country, but come forward in our Turn to aſſiſt with our Voice, our Exertions, and our Councils, in a Work, to which the Wiſdom and Power of Parliament is incompetent without our co-operation—the Application of a Policy, wholly new, to the preſſing Wants, and to the intimate Neceſſities of a People long forgotten, out of the Sight and out of the Knowledge of a ſuperintending Legiſlature.—Accordingly we are come, and we claim no ſmall Merit that we have found our Way to the Door of Parliament. It has not been made eaſy for us.—Every Art and Induſtry has been exerted to obſtruct us: Attempts have been made to divide us into Factions, and to throw us into Confuſion. We have ſtood firm and united. We have received Hints and Cautions; obſcure Intimations and public Warnings to guard our Supplications againſt Intimidation. We have reſiſted that Species of diſguiſed and artful Threat. We have been traduced, calumniated, and libelled. We have witneſſed ſiniſter Endeavours again to blow the Flame of religious Animoſity, and awake the ſlumbering Spirit of popular Terrors and popular Fury.—But we have remained unmoved.

moved. We are, indeed, accuſtomed to this tumid Agitation and Ferment in the Public Mind. In former Times it was the conſtant Precurſor of more intenſe Perſecution, but it has alſo attended every later and happier Return of Legiſlative Mercy. But whether it betokens us evil or good, to Parliament we come, to ſeek, at that Shrine, a Safeguard from impending Danger, or a Communication of new Benefits.

WHAT then do we aſk of Parliament? To be thoroughly united and made one with the reſt of our Fellow Subjects? That alas! would be our firſt, our deareſt Wiſh. But if that is denied us, if Sacrifices are to be made, if by an Example of rare Moderation, we do not aſpire to the Condition of a fair Equality, we are not at a loſs to find in the Range of Social Benefits (which is nearly that of our preſent Excluſions) an Object which is, and ought to be the Scope and reſting Place of our Wiſhes and our Hopes. That which if we do not aſk, we are not worthy to obtain. We knock that it may be opened unto us. We have learned by Tradition from our Anceſtors, we have heard by Fame in Foreign Lands, where we have been driven to ſeek Education in Youth, and Bread in Manhood: and by the Contemplation of our own Minds, we are filled with a deep and unalterable Opinion that the Iriſh, formed upon the Model of the Britiſh Conſtitution, is a Bleſſing of ineſtimable value: That it contributes, and is even eſſentially neceſſary for national and individual Happineſs. Of this Conſtitution, we feel ourſelves worthy; and though not practically, we know the Benefits of its Franchiſes.

Franchiſes. Nor can we without a criminal Diſſimulation conceal from Parliament the painful Inquietude which is felt by our whole Perſuaſion, and the Dangers to which we do not ceaſe to be expoſed, by this our total and unmerited Excluſion from the common Rights, Privileges, and Franchiſes conceded by our Kings for the Protection of the Subject. This Excluſion is indeed the Root of every Evil. It is that which makes Property inſecure, and Induſtry precarious. It pollutes the Stream of Juſtice. It is the Cauſe of daily Humiliation. It is the inſurmountable Barrier, the impaſſible Line of Separation which divides the Nation, and which keeping Animoſity alive prevents the intire and cordial Intermixture of the People. And therefore inevitably it is, that ſome Share, ſome Portion, ſome Participation in the Liberties and Franchiſes of our Country, becomes the primary and eſſential Object of our ardent and common Solicitation. It is a Bleſſing for which there is no Price, and can be no Compenſation. With it, every Evil is tolerable; without it, no Advantage is deſirable. In this, as in all Things, we ſubmit ourſelves to the paramount Authority of Parliament; and we ſhall acquieſce in what is given, as we do in what is taken away. But this is the Boon we aſk. We hunger, and we thirſt for the Conſtitution of our Country. If it ſhall be deemed otherwiſe, and ſhall be determined that we are qualified perhaps for the baſe and lucrative Tenures of profeſſional Occupation, but unworthy to perform the free and noble Services of the Conſtitution, we ſubmit, indeed, but we ſolemnly proteſt againſt that diſtinction for ourſelves and for our Children. It is no act of ours. Whatever judgment may await our merits or

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our failings, we cannot conclude ourſelves, by recognizing, for a conſideration, the principle of ſervility and perpetual degradation.

These are the Sentiments which we feel to the Bottom of our Hearts, and we diſcloſe them to the free Parliament of a Monarch whoſe Glory it is to reign over a free People.—To you we commit our Supplications and our Cauſe. We have, indeed, little to apprehend in this benigner Age, from the malignant Aſperſions of former Times, and not more from the obſolete Calumnies of controverſial Strife; although we ſee them endeavouring again to collect the Remnant of their exhauſted Venom, before they die for ever, in a laſt and feeble Effort to traduce our Religion and our Principles. But, as Oppreſſion is ever fertile in Pretexts, we find other Objections ſtarted againſt us more dangerous becauſe they are new, or new at leaſt in the Novelty of a ſhameleſs Avowal. They are principally three——First, It is contended that we are a People originally and fundamentally different from yourſelves, and that our Intereſts are for ever irreconcileable, becauſe ſome hundred Years ago our Anceſtors were conquered by your's. We deny the Concluſion; we deny the Fact, It is Falſe. In addreſſing ourſelves to you we ſpeak to the Children of our Anceſtors, as we alſo are the Children of your Forefathers: Nature has triumphed over Law; we are intermixed in Blood; we are blended in Connexion; we are one Race; we all are Iriſhmen; Subjects of the Imperial Crown of Ireland. The Honour of Parliament is concerned, to repreſs the Audacity of thoſe who tell us that you are a foreign Colony; and conſequently

conſequently ought to govern according to the Principles of Invaders, and the Policy of recent Uſurpation. At leaſt we confide that you will not ſuffer the Walls of Parliament to be contaminated with that Libel upon the Government of Ireland. The Shaft which was aimed at us, has ſtruck yourſelves; A memorable, but at the ſame Time we truſt, a moſt auſpicious Example, to teach both you and us, and our common Poſterity, that our Intereſts are one; and that whatever affects the well-being and honour of the Roman Catholics, is alſo injurious to the Proteſtant Intereſt. Of the ſame Complexion and Tendency are the two Objections, one that our Advancement in Property and Privilege, would lead to a Repeal of the Act of Settlement; the other, that, our Participation in the Liberties and Franchiſes of our Country would endanger the Exiſtence of the Conſtitution into which we are admitted.

A Reſumption of the Lands forfeited, by our and your Anceſtors, (for they are the ſame) after the Lapſe of ſo many Years, (near three Returns of the longeſt Period of legal Limitation) after the Diſperſion and Extinction of ſo many Families; after ſo many Tranſitions and Diviſions, Repartitions and re-conſolidations of Property; ſo many Sales, Judgments, Mortgages and Settlements; and after all various Proceſs of voluntary and legal Operation to conceive the Revival of Titles dormant for One Hundred and Fifty Years, is an Idea ſo perfectly chimerical, ſo contrary to the Experience of all Ages, and all Countries, ſo repugnant to the Principles of Juriſprudence, and ſo utterly impoſſible in Point of Fact; that the

the Roman Catholics of Ireland, once for all make it their earneſt Requeſt to have that Queſtion thoroughly inveſtigated, in the aſſured Hope, that ſo idle, vain and abſurd an Object of public Apprehenſion, being expoſed and laid open to the Eye of Reaſon, may ſleep in Oblivion for ever.

As to the other Subject of Apprehenſion we have but one Anſwer to make. We deſire to partake in the Conſtitution, and therefore we do not deſire to deſtroy it. Parliament is now in Poſſeſſion of our Caſe; our Grievances; our Sorrows; our Obſtructions; our Solicitudes; our Hopes. We have told you the Deſire of our Hearts. We do not aſk to be relieved from this or that Incapacity; Not the Abolition of this or that odious Diſtinction; not even perhaps to be in the fulneſs of Time, and in the Accompliſhment of the great comprehenſive Scheme of Legiſlation, finally incorporated with you in the Enjoyment of the ſame Conſtitution. Even beyond that Mark, we have an ultimate and if poſſible an Object of more interior deſire. We look for a Union of Affections; A gradual, and therefore a total Obliteration of all the Animoſities; (on our part they are long extinct) and all the Prejudices which have kept us disjoined. We come to you a great Acceſſion to the Proteſtant Intereſt, with Hearts and Minds ſuitable to ſuch an End. We do not come as jealous and ſuſpicious Rivals, to gavel the Conſtitution, but with fraternal Minds to participate in the great incorporeal Inheritance of Freedom, to be held according to the Laws and Cuſtoms of the Realm, and by our immediate Fealty and Allegiance to the King. And ſo may you receive us.

And we ſhall ever pray.

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